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Author(s): Lisa Barro

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## CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS AT THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Lisa Barro

*Presented at the PMG session of the 2006 AIC Annual Meeting in Providence, Rhode Island*

### Abstract

A project is currently being conducted at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum to survey the collection's photographic materials. The primary purpose of the survey is to characterize the media, surface finishing techniques and mounts. The long-term goal is to formulate a preservation strategy for these works including their eventual storage in cool and/or cold storage. The museum is actively acquiring contemporary photographs, many of which are large format, unglazed color works. Examples from the collection will demonstrate the range of materials. Surface finishing materials, if they are used, include glossy and matte plastic laminates and traditional and non-glare acrylic. Mounting substrates include acrylic, aluminum, various foam boards and mat board. The storage, crating, shipping and exhibition of these works will be discussed. These works are often approached as unglazed paintings have been in the past. Unglazed works are extremely vulnerable to dust, surface abrasion and accretions. Dusting was conducted with syringe puffers and lambswool dusters. Some accretions were successfully removed with dry Microfiber cloths. These methods were based on preliminary research at the Museum of Modern Art to determine safe dusting and cleaning cloth materials for face-mounted to acrylic works (Erin Murphy, *Treatment of Andreas Gursky's Rhine II: Testing of Dusting Materials and Cleaning Cloths*, *Topics in Photographic Preservation* Vol. 11, 2005). Overall, the most valuable tools in dealing with the risks to these unglazed works are education and communication about the vulnerable surfaces.

Lisa Barro  
Project Photography Conservator  
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

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